The Cryptozoology Review

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The Editor's Page

Welcome to another issue of *The Cryptozoology Review* (*TCR*). Response towards the card stock cover and extra pages in the last issue was very good and starting next issue we will return to this better product. I would have liked to have kept the features with the issue you are holding, but increased quality of production means increased costs and unfortunately the current *TCR* budget could not cover these costs. Obviously, then, I must announce the new subscription prices. This will certainly be the last increase in price for *TCR*, as I feel that if I had to increase prices again I would be severely endangering subscription numbers for *TCR*! In any case, the subscription increase is not very much (the most was for overseas subscribers, where already high postage was doubled because of the heavier "new" *TCR*) and I think, as do many others, that TCR is still a very worthwhile publication.

The new subscription dues are as follows (in Canadian funds and all by air mail):

in Canada: $16.00
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I hope you find the increase in subscription a necessary evil, and I invite any criticisms, comments or questions that you may have.

All back issues are also still available; please write for details on contents and prices. Thank you again for your continuing support and I hope you enjoy this issue of *TCR*.

– Ben S. Roesch

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On the cover: A sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) attacking a giant squid (*Architeuthis* sp.). Illustration by Richard Ellis.

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Letters

We welcome letters on any thoughts you may have about TCR or its contents. If you write us a letter, please tell us whether or not it is fine with you to publish it in the "Letters section of upcoming issues. We reserve the right to edit letters for content and/or clarity.

Primate Colour Change

I read with interest the "Reinhold Messner and the Yeti" item in the Compendium of Cryptids in Vol. 2 No. 3, but feel I should mention a minor error.

It was said that no non-human primates are known to show differences in hair colour between adults and young. I am afraid that this is incorrect. I know of at least four species that exhibit such differences.

In the Eastern (Abyssinian or Guereza) black-and-white colobus (*Colobus guereza*), the youngsters are born white, whereas the adults are black and white (as their common name implies). The young retain this colouration until they are 3 months old. At this point their hands and feet turn black. After 1 year the juvenile develops full adult colouration but still retains a pink face.

In the ebony langur (*Trachypithecus auratus*) the colour difference is even more pronounced. The adults are black whilst the youngsters are bright orange. They begin to develop adult colouration within their first year.

This is also the case in the silvered langur (*Trachypithecus cristatus*) and François's langur (*Trachypithecus francoisi*), though in the latter the juvenile colour is not as bright.

(It is worth noting that all of these species are members of the family Cercopithecidae.)

Nancy Priston.
Twickenham, Middlesex, England.

The Con Rit

I was reading Ben Roesch's article about sea serpent carcasses in the last issue of *TCR* and stumbled upon the "con rit." I asked my wife, who was born in Vietnam, about it. She didn't know anything about this strange creature and could tell me only the meaning of the words: "something with many legs, like a centipede."

She loves seafood, especially crustaceans. My interest in invertebrates is strictly zoological. I hate seafood. Should the con rit be some giant lobster or other crustacean, which is quite unlikely, gastronomical and zoological interests will collide (at least in our family).

Nevertheless, the con rit is an interesting case for cryptozoology, and I wonder if it ever will be solved.

Thomas Kovacs
Zürich, Switzerland.

Errata

On p. 18, paragraph 3, line 7, of last issue, in Darren Naish's article on moa, it was written: "It may also be considered unlikely that moa legs were booted when many of these bush-dwelling birds would have needed naked or thickly-feathered legs to move easily through their environment." The phrase "thickly-feathered legs" should have read "thinly-feathered legs." Also, on p. 22, paragraph 3, line 4, moa are incorrectly referred to as "moas."

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A Compendium of Cryptids

("All the latest cryptozoology news fit to print")

by Ben S. Roesch

Stirrings at Loch Ness

The Loch Ness monster continues to make the news, though certainly with less frequency than in previous years (see Bille, 1998). Unsurprisingly, Nessie also continues to be extremely elusive; an essential trait for any lake monster, it seems.

Of course, people are still trying to solve the secret of Loch Ness. Dr. Robert Rines, whose 1972 expedition to Loch Ness obtained the famous and controversial "flipper photos", is still on the track of Nessie. The 75-year-old American lawyer and inventor was featured on a Channel Four (UK) television documentary called "To The Ends Of The Earth" on April 27, 1998. Channel Four participated in an expedition with Rines to Loch Ness for the program, but were unsuccessful in obtaining evidence for the lake's famous inhabitant. Rines remains undiscouraged, however, and is currently working on a sophisticated underwater infrared camera (which would only be triggered by large objects) that he plans to use to capture Nessie on film. In the past, other photo efforts at Loch Ness have been hampered by the lake's perpetually dark and peat-filled waters; the new infrared cameras will be able to cut through this opaque medium and hopefully gather good evidence for Nessie's existence.

Meanwhile, in March (1998) it was announced that a 53-year-old Scottish pet food salesman and former soldier named Richard White had spotted the Loch Ness monster in 1997 and obtained some good photographs as well. White was driving along the eastern side of the lake on a sales trip to Foyers when he "noticed an unusual disturbance halfway across the loch towards Urquhart Castle on the opposite [side]." He stopped, retrieved a camera he keeps in his car in case of a car accident (for documentation and insurance reasons), and started snapping photographs of what he thought must be Nessie. White reported his sighting and photographs to Gary Campbell, president of the Official Loch Ness Monster Fan Club, in Inverness; they did not announce the incident until this year because the two did not want to go public with the photographs until they had them analyzed by experts using computer enhancement techniques. The experts were "unable to decide exactly what the pictures showed". The photos, insists Campbell, are among the best ever purporting to show the Loch Ness monster. In fact, the bookmaking firm William and Hill (who offer odds of 250-1 against the existence of the Loch Ness monster) was sufficiently impressed to award a prize of £500 ($US 825 or $CAN 1150) to White for the best Nessie photo of the year. However, so far as I am aware, the photographs have not yet been published and none of my colleagues have seen them. Hopefully, this will change soon.

Only one sighting has been reported so far in 1998 (the last recorded sighting was in August 1997). It occurred at about 9 a.m. on May 30, and the witness was a 22-year-old woman from Marlborough, Wiltshire, England, who was vacationing at Loch Ness. She reported her sighting anonymously (for fear of being ridiculed) to the Official Loch Ness Monster Fan Club. She described the encounter: "I saw a large, black object rising about 10 feet [3 m] out of the water just beneath Urquhart Castle. It stayed there for about two minutes and when I looked again later, it was gone". The Official Loch Ness Monster Fan Club's president Gary Campbell had been monster-watching in the area earlier at 6:30 a.m. (but unfortunately had left before the sighting took place), and described the weather conditions at that time: "There was a light breeze with some mist lying low over the water." The unidentified woman's sighting--a typical "long-necked" type--isn't exactly a remarkable one, and one might suggest that it was a result of waves and/or

atmospheric refraction, whereby small objects on the lake's surface may appear larger and longer than they really are.

Another alleged "encounter"--but not sighting--with the Loch Ness monster occurred at about 4:15 p.m. on May 1, 1998. Catherine Handley was with her 12-year-old son Steven on the patio of the lakeside Clansman Hotel, which she owns, when she heard a man yelling about a disturbance on the lake near the entrance to the marina opposite the hotel. She looked out to the water, and saw what she described as a "very strange wake, unlike any boat." Several guests at the hotel also saw the "wake." The man who alerted Handley to the commotion was Alex Crosbie, of Inverness, who has been monster-watching at the lake for more than 30 years. He himself has claimed to have seen Nessie many times and described what he saw on May 1: "I saw a big disturbance in the water opposite the Clansman. I reckon whatever caused it must have been at least 40 ft [12 m] long. I did not see anything above the water on this occasion, but my biggest regret is that my video camera was in the car at the time." Handley also elaborated on the activity in the water: "As my hotel is situated at the side of Loch Ness, I know what boat wakes look like. We had seen the *Jacobite Queen* going up earlier. This was different. It was like the circles left by an oar when a boat is being rowed, widening out in ripples to a distance of something like 50 feet [15 m]. I did not see anything above the water, but experiences I have had over the years have convinced me that there is something large in the loch."

Handley's previous experiences with the Loch Ness monster were two similar "encounters" in 1996 and 1997. In September 1996, she was walking across her hotel's parking lot late at night when she heard splashing noises coming from the marina. She said: "There were still tourists about at that time of year and I checked with boat owners to see if any of them had been starting up engines. They had not." Then, one silent night in November 1997, she heard "a huge splashing by something very large", again coming from the marina. The *Aberdeen Press and Journal* reported: "It was as though something had somehow got into the marina and was finding difficulty in getting back out again to the open waters of the loch."

Handley's encounters, and the May 5 sighting of the disturbance in the water, cannot really be taken as good evidence for the existence of the Loch Ness monster. One could just as easily say that the May 5 encounter was really caused by people throwing large rocks from shore, or perhaps was the result of atmospheric refractions and mirages. It is known that Loch Ness can play tricks on the eyes, as it is a large body of water, sometimes completely calm, and its high shorelines cast deep shadows and reflections, causing small objects like birds and other animals, boat wakes, and wind-caused waves to become totally out of proportion in the viewer's eyes. The two sounds heard by Handley could have been caused by a deer entering the lake, waterfowl, one or more large fish jumping, or a boat dropping anchor. Of course, not all of these potential explanations are credible, but one should not automatically consider any unusual activity in Loch Ness as evidence for the existence of Nessie, merely because of the location. Only if a strange animal is associated with the strange activity can we perhaps consider it to be a sighting of Nessie. That identification, of course, depends on whether or not the alleged creature actually exists.

Sources: Anon. 1998. "Amateur cameraman prompts new Loch Ness speculation." *Reuters News Service*, March 2. // Anon. 1998. "Loch Ness hotelier claims encounter with the monster." *Aberdeen* [Scotland] *Press and Journal*, May 5. // Bille, Matt. 1998. "Whatever happened to Loch Ness?" *Exotic Zoology* 5 (May/June): 1-6. // Frew, Callum. 1998. "Girl spots monster." *Scottish Daily Record* (Glasgow), June 1. // Morgan, Kathleen. 1998. "I've been trying for 26 years ... but I'll prove Nessie exists before I die." *Scottish Daily Record*, April 27.

The "Tufi Mariner"

There are over 370 extant species of sharks worldwide, and each year several more are added to the zoological record. Typically, these new additions are small animals, often living in the deep sea. They are excellent testaments to the Earth's spectacular biodiversity, but it is usually larger animals that attract the most attention when first discovered.

Thus, I was particularly interested by a posting last summer by Kevin Kearney (1997a), of Millersville University, to Shark-L, an Internet mailing list devoted to discussion about sharks and rays. In it, he wrote:

> [H]as anyone ever heard of a shark known as the Tufi mariner? A classmate of mine grew up in Papua New Guinea and told me that this animal looks almost exactly like a tiger [shark] [*Galeocerdo cuvier*] [Fig. 1] except for a triangle-shaped black area on the anterior region of the pectoral fins. I wondered if this was just a color morph or maybe a subspecies of [the tiger shark].

In later correspondence, Kearney told me the "Tufi mariners" his classmate had caught were usually 6 to 7 ft long (1.8 to 2.1 m), but that they had been seen as long as "normal" tiger sharks--around 12 to 14 ft (3.7 to 4.3 m).

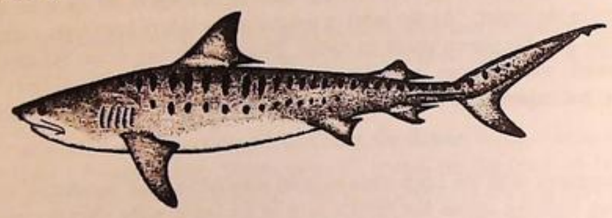

Fig. 1. Tiger shark (*Galeocerdo cuvier*). Illustration by Richard Martin (1996).

Despite Kearney's request, no one on Shark-L seemed to know anything about the "Tufi mariner." So what might it be? Is it really a distinct subspecies or even species of tiger shark? I am unconvinced, although it is interesting that there was reportedly not just a single specimen of the "Tufi mariner" (which might mean it was just a freak tiger shark), but several. Richard Martin (1997) told me that he has also heard of the "Tufi mariner", and suggested that the presence of the black mark might be a misinterpretation. Alternatively, if the black mark is only on one of the pectoral fins, it may be the result of a simple injury. He added that in a study of the schools of hammerheads off Baja California conducted by Peter Klimley, it was noted that new injuries to the sharks are white, but turn dark after about two weeks. Still, if this was the case it is strange that several "Tufi mariners" were caught, apparently each with the same black mark at the base of the pectoral fins. Certainly, further research is needed to solve this selachian mystery.

Sources: Kearney, Kevin. 1997a. Post to the Shark-L Internet mailing list, August 14. // Kearney, Kevin. 1997b. Pers. comm, August 15. // Martin, Richard. 1995. *Shark Smart: the Divers' Guide to Understanding Shark Behaviour*. (North Vancouver: Diving Naturalist Press). // Martin, Richard. 1997. Pers. comm., December 4.

Notes on Various New and Rediscovered Species

• Hans-Reiner Simon of Mannheim University has calculated that about 30 000 vertebrate species remain to be discovered. (The total of known species is 52 000.) Simon achieved the estimate by looking at the rates of new species discoveries over time, identifying different trends and then making predictions for the future. The break up of species for some of the major vertebrate groups will be approximately as follows, if Simon's predictions are correct: the number of bony fishes will rise from 26 000 to 43 500 species; reptiles from 6 900 to 10 250 species; and mammals from 4 675 to 6 560.
Source: Anon. 1997. "Natural Numbers." *BBC Wildlife* 15 (June): 58.

• Studies performed by Joel Cracraft and colleagues at the American Museum of Natural History on the mitochondrial DNA of Sumatran tigers (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*) suggest that this subspecies (one of eight

subspecies of tigers in the world) may in fact be a separate species. Details of the study are not known to me as of yet, but the discovery, if verified, is certainly quite remarkable even if the potential new species is quite similar to other tigers. Sumatran tigers are the smallest of the eight subspecies in the world, weighing from 100 to 140 kg (220 to 300 lb). Unfortunately, as is the case with many tiger subspecies, the Sumatran tiger is endangered, with only 400 to 500 individuals remaining in the wild, and 235 in captive breeding programs. Hopefully, extra conservation efforts will be employed to ensure that this possible new big cat is saved from extinction.
Source: Anon. 1998. "Sumatran tiger a separate species." *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), June 13.

• A tiny, gray-black bird of the genus *Scytalopus* (Fig. 2) discovered last year (1997) in a marshy area in Curitiba, Brazil (about 420 miles [670 km] southwest of Rio de Janeiro), was identified as a new species in April, 1998. The half-ounce (14 g), 4-inch (10 cm) long bird has been provisionally named the "lowland tapaculo." A description and species name will be published later this year (1998) by the bird's discoverers, Marcos Bornschein, Bianca Reinhert and Mauro Pichorim of the Federal University of Parana. The researchers first received a hint as to the existence of the new species when they recorded a bird's song last year that was unlike any other known to them. They caught the culprit some time after in special nets, but it took them several months to determine that it was indeed a new species. The "lowland tapaculo" is the second new bird species Bornschein and Reinhert have discovered; in the same marshy area in Curitiba they found a new bird now known as *Stymphalornis acupirostris*.

Fig. 2. Rufous-vented tapaculo (*Scytalopus femoralis micropterus*), a typical South American tapaculo. From Ridgely and Tudor (1994).

Sources: Anon. 1998. "New bird discovered in southern Brazil." *http://cnn.com/EARTH/9804/25/brazil.newbird.ap/*, April 25. // Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. 1994. *The Birds of South America*. (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.)

• In November 1997, Robert S. Ridgely, director of the Center for Neotropical Ornithology at the Academy of Natural Sciences (in Philadelphia), and Ecuadorean ornithologist Lelis Navarrete were walking along a mountain path in Ecuador when they heard a strange bird call similar to "an owl's hoot and a dog's bark." Realizing the call was unlike that of any of the known birds in the area, Ridgely made a recording of the noise and then played it back hoping that it would arouse curiosity in the source of the sound. The source was interested, and a 10-inch long bird with a broad white stripe below its eye and a black crown came crashing through the underbrush towards the two scientists. They immediately realized it was a new species, and in January 1998 nets were set to capture a few specimens. News reports on the new find claimed the new species was a member of the genus *Antpitta*, but no such genus exists. "Antpitta" is, however, a common name of several genera of birds, which together with the antthrushes form the family Formicariidae. The press called antpittas a group of enigmatic, long-legged, non-migratory birds that hop along the forest floor, where they forage for insects. Since the birds with the common name "antpitta" fit well with this description, it is reasonable to assume that the new species is a type of antpitta (Fig. 3), and by some miscommunication the press considered this name to be the genus of the new species. In any case, the genus and species of the new bird will be given in a forthcoming description in the journal *The Auk*. It is worth noting that the new antpitta was discovered in a well-explored area near to the the Podocarpus National Park, in the Ecuadorean Andes.

Fig. 3. Tawny antpitta (*Grallaria quitensis quitensis*), a typical South American antpitta. From Ridgely and Tudor (1994).

Sources: Brin, Dinah. 1998. "Scientists discover bird." *Associated Press*, June 10. // Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. 1994. *The Birds of South America*. (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.)

• A recent article in *Equinox* reports that six expeditions to Vietnam over the last few years by the Royal Ontario Museum (in Toronto) in search of reptiles and amphibians have turned up many new species. Since 1994, "a handful" of new species have been described, 20 more are under direct study, and approximately 100 are waiting to be examined. On the most recent trip, in Fall 1997, expedition scientists were coming across so many new species that they began carrying one collection bag for known species and one exclusively for new ones. One night, the team found three new lizards and a new snake and frog after surveying a single stream. One can only hope that the continued evidence for great biodiversity in Vietnam will influence the protection of its rapidly disappearing natural habitats.
Source: Anthony, Leslie. 1998. "Unveiling Vietnam's Newest Species." *Equinox* 16 (December/January): 15.

• A new species of ray from Brazil was classified last year (1997), after two years of study. The ray, which has not yet been given a scientific name, has a narrow "bluish-gold" body, with black spots. It also has big eyes. Researchers learned that the new species had already been "discovered" and sent to the American Museum of Natural History, but it was identified as a previously known species.
Source: Bille, Matt. 1997. "News and Comment." *Exotic Zoology* 4 (June): 4.

• Over 100 specimens of a species of orchid believed extinct for about 50 years have been found on Alexander Selkirk Island, 1200 km (745 miles) off the coast of Chile. *Gavilea insularis* was rediscovered on the island by French botanists Philippe Danton and Michel Baffra and Chilean guard Ramon Schiller. The plant grows to about 12.5-30.0 cm (5.0-11.8 inches) in height, and has 10 to 20 bright yellow flowers.
Source: Anon. 1998. "'Extinct' orchid found in Chile." *Associated Press*, February 10.

Other Cryptozoology News

• Rex Gilroy, the New South Wales (Australia) naturalist and self-styled monster hunter, is still making extraordinary claims. Recently, his assertion is that he possesses a fossilized humanoid skull that he unearthed a year ago near a town called Mudgee. The skull, which is displayed in Gilroy's small Unknown Animals Research Centre and Museum in Tamworth, apparently "has a long, narrow braincase, a low forehead and a thick eyebrow ridge." Gilroy thinks that the skull is that of a yowie, Australia's questionable unknown hominoid, and that the yowie itself is of the *Homo erectus* lineage. It is his idea that the yowie has lived in Australia for many thousands of years (hence Aboriginal tales of hairy men) and may still be lurking in the bush of eastern Australia. Unfortunately, no scientists have come forward to examine the skull and determine its validity. One can only hope that a scientist does take the time to inspect the skull, because such action would soon determine the validity of Gilroy's remarkable claims. Personally, I highly doubt that the skull, or any of Gilroy's other wild claims, are anything notable. Meanwhile, Gilroy is commencing his next project: a book showing how Australia was contacted by civilizations hundreds of thousands of years ago. Gilroy says, "Why study Stonehenge when we can study Australia's lost civilisations?"
Source: Linnell, Garry. 1998. "On the lookout for Australia's 'hairy men'." *Age* (Melbourne, Australia), June 9.

• A small 42 student primary school in Loch Sport, Victoria, Australia (in a rugged area known as Gippsland), has recently entered in the search for the Tasmanian tiger, or thylacine (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*), on the Australian mainland. Sightings of the allegedly extinct animal convinced the small school's principal, Barry Field, to such a degree that he was able to convince Kodak (the popular photography company) to supply 20 single-use cameras to be distributed among some of the students in case of a thylacine sighting. Thylacines officially disappeared from Australia about 3000 to 2000 years ago, but sightings of thylacine-like creatures continue to be reported (see "A

Compendium of Cryptids" in *The Cryptozoology Review* vol. 2 no. 1 and vol. 2 no. 3). The possible continued existence of the thylacine in Australia could have resulted from the alleged release of several individuals from Tasmania (where the species has been officially extinct since 1936, though many alleged sightings after that date suggest to some it still exists there) into the wilds of Gippsland early this century by amateur naturalists. Field initiated the collaboration with Kodak because he wanted to solve the thylacine mystery and because he believes its discovery could earn the school up to $AUS 100 000 ($CAN 89 000 or $US 60 000) and attract attention to the small town of Loch Sport (population 1100). Field claims that there have already been five sightings in the region in 1998, and the town has its very own "thylacine hunter", Michael Moss, who "goes out at night with a camera and a spotlight and, although he's never seen one, ... is a strong believer because he has spoken to so many people who have." Field said: "I've never seen one, but I've spoken to people in the area who swear they have and others who don't know what it was, but it could have been a thylacine because it wasn't something they could easily identify ... These people hold great credibility and have no reason to fabricate anything." (In my opinion, it is questionable whether one should classify a fleeting encounter with an unidentified animal as evidence of thylacines, unless there were specific comments that suggested such an identity.) Students and staff at the school, with help from the community, have set up a "Thylacine Resource Room" there, containing "research materials, press clippings, paintings, stories, details of sightings and poetry." The Museum of Victoria has also got in on the act, donating 20 books on the thylacine to the school. The effort put forward by Loch Sport is commendable and one can only hope that the thylacine turns its head towards the town's waiting cameras.
Source: Giles, Christine. 1998. "Tale of the Tiger." *Herald Sun*, June 2.

• On June 2, 1998, Peter Gladstone, a 69-year-old Scottish explorer and great-grandson of Victorian Prime Minister William Gladstone, set off to search an area in southeast Tibet for the elusive pink-headed duck (*Rhodonessa caryophyllacea*) (Fig. 4). The species has been considered extinct since 1935, when it was last reported shot in the wild; since then there have been a few possible sightings and reported shootings that seem to suggest it may still exist. Gladstone is accompanied by a fellow explorer, Charles Martell (51 years of age), and the two will travel 1000 miles (1600 km) east of Lhasa, Tibet, to an area of marshes, jungles and lakes at an elevation of 14 000 ft (4300 m), where Gladstone thinks the mysterious pink-headed duck may still be nesting. The area has been closed to outsiders for decades because of the Chinese occupation, and it took the two explorers nearly a year to obtain clearance from Chinese authorities to visit the region. Gladstone is also planning to do some yeti hunting on the side, but remains skeptical and calls that activity "just a fun thing."
Sources: Anon. 1998. "Explorer's Tibetan trip in search of a duck." *The Herald*, June 2. // Halliday, Tim. 1978. *Vanishing Birds*. (London: Sidgwick & Jackson).

Fig. 4. Pink-headed duck (*Rhodonessa caryophyllacea*) From Halliday (1978).

• In *The Cryptozoology Review* vol. 2 no. 1, it was mentioned that studies of DNA from a puma-like big cat shot in 1986 in Mexico, and reputed to be the legendary onza, proved that the animal was actually a puma (*Felis concolor*). The studies have now been confirmed, with a paper by P.A. Dratch *et al.* on the research being published in *Cryptozoology* vol. 12, which is going to press soon. The team performing the identification used isoenzyme electrophoresis and albumin isoelectric focusing as well as mitochondrial DNA analysis. The authors conclude: "The resulting protein and mitochondrial DNA characteristics of the Onza were indistinguishable from those of North American pumas."
Source: Raynal, Michel. 1998. Pers. comm., May 24.

• The coelacanth (*Latimeria chalumnae*) is becoming increasingly rare off the Comoros Islands, where the only known population exists. The fish, first discovered in 1938, is the only remaining member of the order

Coelacanthiformes, a group which supposedly died out about 65 million years ago. It is interesting to note that *Latimeria* is not as primitive as it is usually thought to be. It does look similar to the 125 now extinct species in the fossil record (the group dates back 400 million years and the last known fossil species disappeared 65 million years ago), but its biology and physiology is quite different. A recent survey determined that there probably only about 300 *Latimeria* remaining off the Comoros. A little over a decade ago, the number was more like 650. The decline is being blamed on unintentional hookings by local fishermen, who are after other fish, such as the oilfish, which live in the same deep water habitat as *Latimeria*.
Source: Bartlett, Ellen. 1997. "Going twice." *Boston Globe*, December 1.

• A young female giant squid washed ashore at Newburgh, Scotland, 30 km (19 miles) from Aberdeen, in late January, 1998. It is the first found in Scotland for 13 years, and is 15 ft (4.5 m) long and weighs 100 lb (45 kg). A team from Aberdeen University's zoology department is examining the rare find, in the hope that it may shine more light on the biology of this extremely elusive species.
Source: Lumsden, S. 1998. "Chance finding helps solve mysteries of deep-sea squid." *Scotsman* (Edinburgh, Scotland), January 21.

• When a strange black cat was photographed in Kerinci Seblat National Park in Sumatra by an automatic infrared camera, members of a team from Fauna & Flora International (of the Indonesian Institute for Science) weren't sure what it was. Soon afterwards, however, another photo was taken, the animal was sighted and footprint casts were collected; the black cat was identified as a melanistic form of the golden cat (*Felis temminckii*). Melanism is caused by an excess of melanin, a black pigment. Usually it is rare, but locals claim that this is not so with the golden cats in the area. There are also reports of black tigers.
Sources: Anon. 1997. "Feline Find." *BBC Wildlife* 15 (June): 58. // Nowak, R.W. and Paradiso, J.L. (eds.). 1983. *Walker's Mammals of the World*, 4th Edition, Vol. 1 and 2. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).

Fig. 5. Golden cat (*Felis temminckii*). From Nowak and Paradiso (1983)

• On February 20, 1998, a new specimen of megamouth shark (*Megachasma pelagios*) was caught off Tablon municipality, Cagayan de Oro, Philippines. The 5.5 m (18 ft) shark, a deep-water inhabitant that feeds on plankton, was towed to the shore of Puerto municipality. It is the eleventh known specimen of the megamouth to be recorded since the species was first discovered in 1976 off Hawaii, and was determined to be a male. Local residents did not realize the rarity of the find and cut up the body for consumption.
Source: Elizaga, Elson. 1998. "Ecological News, Cagayan de Oro." http://cdo.weblinq.com/~econews. // Morrissey, John. 1998. Post to the Elasmobranch Internet mailing list. March 18.

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How Big Does the Giant Squid Get?

by Richard Ellis

We know virtually nothing about the natural history of the giant squid (*Architeuthis* spp.), except that it occasionally washes ashore--and when that happens, we don't know why. Its feeding habits, breeding habits, vertical and geographic distribution, life span, and habitat are all unknown. The giant squid is one of the largest animals in the world, but we do not know how big it actually gets. The maximum size of the giant squid has long been a subject for speculation among scientists, seamen, whalers, authors, and almost anyone else with an interest in the sea's larger inhabitants. The self-appointed authority on such matters, *The Guinness Book of Animal Facts and Feats*, tells us that "the largest squid so far recorded" was the Thimble Tickle specimen of 1879, that measured 55 feet (17 m) from tail tip to tentacle tip (Fig. 1). (1) But Arthur C. Clarke, the scientist and writer, said on his 1988 video series *Mysterious World*, "it would be strange indeed if the world's biggest squid had been among the very few cast ashore to be examined and measured by naturalists. There may well be specimens more than a hundred feet [30 m] in length." Clarke's *Mysterious World* also contains an interview with the late Frederick Aldrich, who was a teuthologist and giant squid expert at Memorial University of Newfoundland (St. John's). Aldrich is shown examining a 20-foot-long (6 m) immature specimen of *Architeuthis*, and he says, "I believe the giant squid reach an approximate maximum size of something like 150 feet [45 m]."

Fig. 1. Comparison of size between the Thimble Tickle giant squid and a human diver. From (6).

Ellis, Richard. 1998. "How Big Does the Giant Squid Get?" *The Cryptozoology Review* 3 (1): 11-19.

Because *Architeuthis* is already such a spectacular animal, those who would include it in their catalog of monsters often find it easy to increase its length substantially, and often its weight as well. In a Time-Life book on *Dangerous Sea Creatures*, for example, Thomas Dozier introduces his discussion of giant squid by saying that "two 42-foot [13 m] tentacles were vomited by a captive whale in an aquarium, and experts calculated that these had to belong to a monster measuring at least 66 feet (20 m) and weighing better than 85,000 pounds [38 600 kg]." Later, Dozier calls a 50-footer (15 m) "ordinary," and says that there have been sperm whales captured with "tentacle marks 18 inches [46 cm] across, which would have to have been inflicted by a gargantuan squid of at least 200 feet long [60 m]." (2) All this is nonsense, of course, but there are some accounts that are not so easy to dismiss.

For example, in Bernard Heuvelmans's 1958 book, *Le Kraken et la Poulpe Colossal* (an English translation is awaiting publication by Kegan-Paul International), we find accounts of giant squid and parts thereof that strongly suggest to him "that there must be *Architeuthis* weighing more than 5 tons, and some even larger ones which must weigh between 2 and 27 tons, the normal weight being around 8 tons. There are good reasons to believe that there may even exist specimens twice as long as that of Thimble Tickle, which, depending upon their girth, might have weighed between 16 and 216 tons, but more likely around 64 tons." (3)

It is impossible to demonstrate that a 16-ton *Architeuthis* does not exist, but even if it did, Heuvelmans commits a fundamental error in calculating the weight of some of these monsters, when he writes that "the density of living creatures is only slightly higher than that of water... a decimetre of living flesh weighs about as much as a litre of water." That may be true for some other living creatures, but the flesh of *Architeuthis*, saturated with ammonium chloride (NH_4Cl), is *lighter* than water, and the giant squid is neutrally buoyant. (This is believed to be the reason that dead or dying squids are found floating at the surface or washed up on the beach.) His assumption, therefore, that the 55-foot-long (17 m) Thimble Tickle squid would have "probably weighed near 24 tons" is patently erroneous.

Some zoologists, crypto- and otherwise, believe only in those creatures (or their dimensions) that can be empirically verified. Thus, the coelacanth (*Latimeria chalumnae*) and the megamouth shark (*Megachasma pelagios*), earlier believed to be extinct or non-existent, respectively, were shown to be living creatures that could be examined, measured, photographed, and stored in museum collections, and are now universally recognized as legitimate members of the world's large marine fauna. Similarly, despite stories about 30- to 40-foot-long (9 to 12 m) great white sharks (*Carcharodon carcharias*), the accepted record size for the species is 21 feet (6.4 m). But Heuvelmans, who has written numerous books and articles on mysterious animals, is of the school that maintains that anything can exist--at almost any size--because no one can prove it does not. His position on *giant* giant squid--and it is a hard one to argue with--is that all those reports of huge arm fragments, sightings at sea, and even attacked ships, cannot all be hoaxes, misidentifications, or typographical errors. (The same goes for sea-serpents, gigantic hominids traipsing through the snowfields of the Himalayas, lake monsters in Scotland, dinosaurs in the African jungles, and any number of other cryptozoological entities.) As evidence that cryptozoology is a valid pursuit, he cites not only the coelacanth and megamouth, but the hundreds of other unexpected creatures that have been discovered, such as the okapi (*Okapia johnstoni*), several new species of beaked whales, two new lemurs in Madagascar, and the saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*), a new goat-like mammal found recently in the jungles of Vietnam (4). Of course, the presence of the okapi in the African forests does not prove that a dinosaur lives in more or less the same place, but it does suggest that there are many creatures still to be discovered in the more remote and unexplored parts of the world. I'm sure there are, but that doesn't mean one of them will be a 216-ton squid.

When a story appears in a reputable journal, it is more likely to be believed that if it appears in the popular press. When Arne Grønningsæter's 15,000-ton freighter *Brunswick* was sailing between Hawaii and Samoa and was "attacked" by a giant squid, it was reported in the Norwegian journal *Naturen* ("Nature") in 1946. The event occurred in the Pacific between 1930 and 1933, and was recounted by Grønningsæter, the master of the ship. Although short on details (he never even estimates the size of the squid), Grønningsæter's account describes the squid swimming

alongside the ship at a speed of 20-25 knots, and then turning towards the vessel, "hitting the hull approximately 150 feet [45 m] from the stern at a depth of 12-15 feet [4-5 m] [Fig. 2]." Since it could not get a grip on the hull, it "skidded along until it ended up in the propeller, where it was ground to pieces." (5) If this occurred, it is the only such story in all the literature; a circumstance that raises the question of its authenticity. If giant squids attack ships, why did it happen only once? (There are other accounts of giant squids attacking ships, such as the famous incident involving the schooner *Pearl* (6), but they are all rather questionable.)

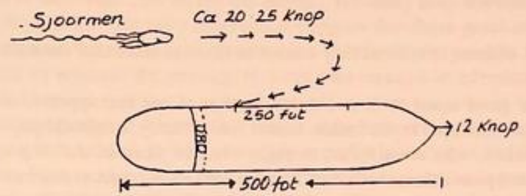


Fig. 2. Arne Grønningsæter's drawing of the alleged attack on his ship by a giant squid.

When there is no physical evidence to corroborate a giant squid report, we often have to rely on anecdotal information, which is often exaggerated and occasionally altogether unbelievable. Nevertheless, some of these stories make it into the popular literature, where they contribute to the already opprobrious reputation of *Architeuthis*.

In 1973, Paul LeBlond and John Sibert, both respected scientists in British Columbia (and both dedicated cryptozoologists), assembled a 64-page report that they entitled, "Observations of Large Unidentified Marine Animals in British Columbia and Adjacent Waters." (7) Mostly devoted to British Columbia's abundant sea serpents, this unpublished report also contains a couple of references to giant cephalopods, such as the story communicated to them (complete with drawing), from a Mr. Charles Dudoward of the "great squid which washed ashore one winter morning of 1922 in front of Mrs. Robertson D. Rudge's Port Simpson Hotel." The drawing (a photocopy of the pastel sketch that was submitted to LeBlond and Sibert) shows a large cephalopod stretched out on the front lawn of the hotel. It was described as "having four long arms on each side, 50 ft. [15 m] long... but the one in the middle is about 100 feet [30 m] long and might be longer when stretched." LeBlond and Sibert, in their comments on this creature, wrote, "This report is very reminiscent of the numerous descriptions of giant squids found on Newfoundland's beaches at the end of the last century... The description fits *Architeuthis* very well and one may safely conclude that his was indeed a specimen of the giant squid."

There is no reason to doubt Mr. Dudoward's report, even though it comes to us as a second-hand story from a location where, as LeBlond and Sibert note, *Architeuthis* has never been recorded. In his book *There Are Giants in the Sea*, however, Michael Bright repeats the story, and even adds another of LeBlond and Sibert's twice-told tales, this one supposedly occurring in 1892, again near Port Simpson, which is on the coast of British Columbia, just south of Ketchikan, Alaska. It seems that a group of Indians were towing a log boom with a flotilla of 50 canoes when they were slowed down by some unseen force. When they finally managed to beach the raft, they discovered "an enormous squid, larger than the raft itself, squashed underneath. One arm was reported to be more than 30 m (100 ft) long and it ended in a large hook. The suckers were described to be 'as big as basin plates, to saucer-sized at the ends.'" (8) (The remaining long arm of the 1922 squid also had a hook on the end.) Although Bright tells us that these are only stories, their appearance in his book legitimizes the reports, and lends credibility to some of the more outlandish aspects--such as the 100-foot-long arms with hooks on the ends, and eyes as big as basin plates.

Bright also includes several other brief mentions about alleged occurrences of *giant* giant squid, but unfortunately without reference as to where he found them. He writes:

> In 1926 ... a badly damaged carcass which locals claimed to be a giant squid, was washed ashore at Port Shepstone on the Natal coast of South Africa. All its arms and tentacles were missing, but estimates, based on the size of the body alone, put its overall length, with outstretched tentacles, at about 30 m (100 ft). Some researchers believe this carcass was that of a whale, but another specimen found at Flower's Cove on the Newfoundland coast in 1934 was positively identified and measured. It was 22 m (72 ft) long. One found in the same area in 1882 was claimed to have a length of 26.9 m (88 ft). (9)

These are interesting claims, but without references they cannot be taken as more than unverified rumours.

Perhaps the most amazing *giant* giant squid story in Bright's book is of one that appeared alongside an Admiralty trawler lying off one of the Maldive Islands in the Indian Ocean (incidentally, Bright *did* provide a reference for this one). The witness was J.D. Starkey, who often fished at night over the stern of the ship using a cluster of light bulbs (the "bulb cluster" of the story) to attract the fishes. Starkey sent his account to *Animals* magazine in response to an article that the magazine had run in September, 1963, entitled "Is There a Sea Serpent?" One night, as he walked the deck on the midnight to 4 a.m. "graveyard watch", he had an unusual visitor:

> The water appeared to become opaque as the bulk of something filled my view. As I gazed, fascinated, a circle of green light glowed in my area of illumination. This green unwinking orb I suddenly realized was an eye. The surface of the water undulated with some strange disturbance. Gradually, I realized that I was gazing at almost point-blank range at a huge squid.
>
> I say 'huge' - the word should be 'colossal', as so far all I could see was the body, and that alone filled my view as far as my sight could penetrate. I am not squeamish, but that cold, malevolent, unblinking eye seemed to be looking directly at me. I don't think I have ever seen anything so coldly hypnotic and intelligent before or since.
>
> I took my quartermaster's torch and, shining it into the water I walked forward. I climbed the ladder of the fo'c'sle and shone the torch downwards. There, in the pool of light, were its tentacles.
>
> As already explained, I would not exaggerate a natural phenomenon, but these were at least 24 inches [60 cm] thick. The suction discs could clearly be seen. The ends of the arms appeared to be twitching slightly, but this may have been a trick of the light.
>
> My heart was going like a sledgehammer. Remember, I was alone on the deck, everyone else turned in. I was not so much afraid as excited, as if this were an opportunity to see something rarely seen by man.
>
> I walked aft keeping the squid in view. This was not difficult as it was lying alongside the ship, quite still except for a pulsing movement. As I approached the stern where my bulb cluster was hanging, there was the body. Every detail was visible--the valve through which the creature appeared to breathe, and the parrotlike beak.
>
> Gradually, the truth dawned: I had walked the length of the ship, 175 feet [53 m] plus. Here at the stern was the head or the body and at the bows the tentacles were clearly visible.... The giant lay, all its arms stretched alongside, gazing up, first with one then with both eyes as it gently rolled. After 15 minutes it seemed to swell as its valve opened fully and without any visible effort it "zoomed", if I may use the expression, into the night.

> I never told anyone aboard as I should have been scoffed at. (10)

In a concluding note to Starkey's story, the editors of *Animals* wrote,

> The giant squids are among the most remarkable, and at the same time, among the least known, of the creatures that live in the sea. From what little we know of them, they appear to inhabit the middle depths of the oceans (not the abyssal depths), but many deep sea creatures move towards the surface at night, and Mr. Starkey's observation suggests that these great mollusks may be among them.... A squid of the enormous size recorded by Mr. Starkey is not beyond the bounds of possibility, and we welcome the privilege of putting his remarkable adventure on record.

Starkey's story is quite wonderful, if for no other reason than it describes a giant squid that is almost four times longer than any one ever documented. Indeed, there may actually be such monsters in the Indian Ocean, but so far, this is the only one that has ever been seen, and Bright concludes his discussion with the somewhat anticlimactic statement: "The largest authenticated giant squid found since 1900 was caught by the crew of a U.S. Coast Guard ship patrolling the Great Bahamas Bank near Tongue of the Ocean... It measured 14.3 m (46.9 feet)."

Long after I had completed the manuscript for my forthcoming book *The Search for the Giant Squid* and turned it over to the publishers (it is scheduled for publication in October, 1998), I received a letter from a man who had seen me on a television program claiming that nobody had ever seen a living giant squid. "Not true," said Dennis Braun, now an operations analyst for a large defense contractor, and he continued:

> In 1969, (about February or March) just prior to my going to Vietnam, I was a 19-year-old Marine Corporal on an amphibious assault training exercise to Vieques Island, near Puerto Rico. We had made an encampment on one of the island's beaches; stayed for about two weeks and were preparing to return to Morehead City, North Carolina, (via the U.S.S. *Francis Marion*) when I and two of my fellow Marines saw something quite extraordinary in the water alongside our ship, which was at anchor.
>
> We had come back aboard ship on the first day of making preparations for re-embarkation, because we had large quantities of equipment to be stowed and there was work to be done in securing this gear in the ship's holds as it was craned aboard from the shuttling landing craft. During lulls in the activity there was lots of idle time on deck, and the sailors were prepared for this by having their own fishing tackle; so we watched them fish.
>
> The water in that area is very clear, having a light sandy bottom, and with no aquatic growth visible around the ship, you could see straight to the bottom. It was like looking into a swimming pool. The weather was sunny and pleasant and the water very calm. Large yellowtail hung around the ship in schools of 20 or 30, and that's what the sailors were mostly interested in.
>
> We saw sharks and a few other odds and ends, and it was about mid-day on the second or third day that I and two friends were leaning on the port-side railing looking south toward Vieques Island (about half a mile or so distant). Someone from the other side of the ship suddenly came over and announced loudly something like, "Hey, you ought to see the size of the barracuda this guy just hooked!" So naturally just about everybody rushed over to that side to watch the battle. Engrossed in our conversation, and figuring there'd be time anyway, my friends and I had stayed behind momentarily--continuing to talk--when I shifted the focus of my vision from the sunlight dancing on the water, to down toward the bottom near the ship. What I saw was astonishing!! There, in full view on the sandy bottom, a huge squid had come to rest! We were amazed as we all three

looked on at the thing.

Apparently it had just decided to lounge alongside the ship, parallel to it, but still in the sun, and you could clearly see even its eyes as it lay there on the sand; it's head to our left, and its tentacles, fanned slightly, extending to our right. The length and girth were truly astounding, and I can only guess as to its actual dimensions, but it was MUCH larger than the one shown laying dead in the TV episode [this specimen was approximately 10 m [30 ft] total length]. It just laid quietly very near the ship, being maybe twenty or so feet out from directly below us, and pretty much centered on where we stood (along its length). I would estimate that to scan it's entire bodylength from my position above the water (about 30 ft. [10 m] up) and by looking straight down, I would have to rotate my eyes at least 30 degrees to the left and 30 degrees to the right.

Its body looked big enough in diameter that I couldn't begin to get my arms around it, (not that I'd want to) but maybe halfway. I have little doubt that the thing could have probably taken down a sport-fishing boat, if it chose to, just based on it's sheer size and weight! The coloration looked pretty normal for what you'd expect in a squid; brownish; darker than the surrounding sand, but almost like it had taken on some of that lighter color.

There was absolutely no doubt at all as to what it was. The water must have been at least fifty or more feet deep for the ship to be there, yet, in its clarity--and from our place on the deck--which was as I would again guess, maybe about thirty feet above the water's surface--we had a very penetrating vantage point. I realize that, based on my assessment of the distance from me, and the angles described above, it was probably at least 100 ft. [30 m] in length.

It just laid there unmoving and seeming to be looking back up at us as we chattered about it and what to do. I remember suggesting that maybe we should go up to the bridge and tell someone. But no, we reasoned in our naiveté, they probably already knew it was there because of Sonar and whatever other sensing equipment they might have--our not realizing that Sonar wouldn't likely even be switched-on when at anchor. Besides, as young Marines, we were all kind of intimidated about approaching officers about anything, much less something like this!

Altogether, I'd say we had watched it for ten or more minutes. Its outline and features were unmistakable and the time we observed it allowed us to scrutinize and compare our observations pretty much without the benefit of imaginative excess.

I know there are those who would dismiss what I claim to have seen--as drifting seaweed, or the shadows of clouds or the like, but I promise you--if you were to take a highly detailed rubber squid 10 ft. [3 m] long and sink it in the deep end of a swimming pool--it was just as clear as that. There were no other structural features around it, and Disney couldn't have done a better job of making it look real.

Vieques Island is immediately south of the Puerto Rico Trench, which, at 27 500 feet (8 400 m), is the deepest part of the Atlantic Ocean. There have been no records whatsoever of giant squid from Puerto Rico--or Cuba, Hispaniola, or any other islands that lie along this vast chasm. The Bahamas, almost 1 000 miles (1 600 km) away, has produced two carcasses, both found floating on the surface: one was found by a Captain Hygom in 1855, and mentioned in Japetus Steenstrup's 1855 introduction of *Architeuthis* to the world (11), and the other was brought to teuthologist Gil Voss at the University of Miami in 1948. (12)

I spoke to Dennis Braun, and he was totally innocent of the controversy that surrounds the giant squid. In fact, although it was very large, he had no reason to assume that the creature he saw was in any way unusual. In the years since 1969, he told me, he has told his story to many people, but evidently he spoke to no one who knew enough about giant squid to tell him that his was a most unusual experience, perhaps unique.

If it is true (and it really was *Architeuthis*) then it adds an entire new dimension to the mystery of the giant squid. Up to now, I have dismissed those stories of those sightings that did not fall within the accepted maximum known length of 55 feet (17 m). But what if Bernard Heuvelmans or Fred Aldrich or J.D. Starkey are correct, and there really are 100-footers out there? And how about Arthur C. Clarke's contention that the largest ones are probably not the ones that washed up? (I'm only willing to include the 100-footers in this amendment; a 150- or 200-foot-long monster would have a very difficult time finding enough food to keep it going, and is still, I believe, in the realm of fantasy.)

Captured sperm whales are often scarred with round marks that look very much like the marks that would have been left by the suckers on the arms of giant squid. Since it is known that these whales eat squid of all sizes (but mostly smaller than *Architeuthis*), it is not an unreasonable assumption that these scars are caused by squid unwilling to be eaten by whales (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3. A sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) attacking a giant squid (*Architeuthis* sp.). Illustration by Richard Ellis.

In *Depths of the Ocean* (1912), Johann Hjort made one of the most often quoted--and misquoted--remarks ever made about the giant squid. In 1902 Hjort was aboard the research vessel *Michael Sars* in the North Atlantic, when they came across a small giant squid floating dead at the surface north of the Faroes. Nothing is spectacular about this sighting, but then Hjort wrote, "...in 1903 in Iceland I had the opportunity of making an interesting observation, showing the gigantic dimensions of these squids." The ship visited the whaling station at Mofjord, where there were two freshly killed whales, a sperm whale and a right whale. Hjort wrote:

> Inspecting the cachalot, I saw around its enormous jaw several long parallel stripes, consisting, as closer scrutiny revealed, of great numbers of circular scars or wounds about 27 mm [1.0 inch] in diameter... It occurred to me that these scars must have been left by the suckers of giant squid, and following up this idea I found in the whale's mouth a piece of squid tentacle 17 cm [7 in] in maximum diameter. (13)

In Hjort's book there is a picture of the "skin of the cachalot with marks from the struggle with *Architeuthis*. Nat. size." The scars that Hjort measured at 27 mm were a little over an inch in diameter, and in the photograph, the largest one measures one inch across. The picture has been reproduced in almost every discussion of sperm whales and squid, but somehow, the diameter of the circular scars has increased to impossible proportions, perhaps through a confusion of the 27 mm scars and the 17 cm (6.7 inches) diameter tentacle.

In the Time-Life book *Dangerous Sea Creatures*, we read that "an ordinary giant squid of 50 feet [15 m] leaves teeth-ringed sucker marks measuring between three and four inches [8 and 10 cm] across on a whale, but sperm whales have been captured with tentacle marks 18 inches [46 cm] across..." (14) In *The Guinness Book of Animal Facts and Feats*, Gerald Wood wrote that scars "measuring up to 5 in. [13 cm] in diameter have been found on the skins of sperm whales captured in the North Atlantic," (15) and Willy Ley--who should have known better--wrote (in *Exotic Zoology*): "Another claim goes for marks on the skin of such a whale of a sucking disk over 2 feet [60 cm] in diameter." (16)

According to marine biologist and teuthologist Malcolm Clarke (1980), the largest circular scars on the whale's heads have come from *Architeuthis*, the squid with the largest suckers. He wrote, "I have not yet seen conclusive evidence to suggest that *sucker* scars are larger than 3.7 cm [1.5 inches] across...." (17) In 1872, Reverend Harvey measured the suckers of the Bonavista Bay specimen at 2.5 inches in diameter. But in his 1938 monograph on sperm whales, L. Harrison Matthews wrote, "Nearly all male Sperm whales carry scars caused by the suckers and claws of large squids, scars caused by suckers up to 10 cm. [4 inches] in diameter being common." (18) Matthews' measurements of 10 cm (4 inches) are so much larger than any other recorded sucker dimensions that one suspects some sort of error, either in measuring or in transcription. Matthews was a respected scientist, and the act of measuring something on a dead whale is not particularly difficult.

Have I been too quick to dismiss the unmeasured giants and too unwilling to modify the statement that "nobody has ever seen a living giant squid"? What if Dennis Braun's story is true? And when I wrote in *The Search for the Giant Squid* that Fred Aldrich's mention of a school of 60 giant squids (19) was impossible because they are not schooling animals, I hadn't seen a little story that appeared in January 1998 in the *Marine Observer*, published in London. In it, a ship's officer captain named C.A. McDowall describes an incident that occurred "some years ago... in the Arabian Sea at night":

> ... we were visited by a large school of giant squid--I think. They just rose out of the deep to look at us, about 200 of them. There were babies the size of a bucket, and adults, the biggest having bodies 3-4 m [10-13 ft] long with two long tentacles about another 6 m [20 ft] long. We lowered the loading ramp to get a good look, and the Captain's grand-daughter took photographs--which probably didn't come out because of the very bright lights and the creatures being in shadow. The eyes were very large, bigger than a dinner plate, but the most remarkable thing was the colour. The top of the head was red, like a Ferrari, and the tentacles were white covered with red spots which made them look pink. Where the red back joined the white area around the eyes, there was a pattern of interlocking spots. The crew tried to catch the babies but once hooked they broke free, and that individual could not be hooked again, which was interesting. They stayed for about an hour and a half, and then slowly sank from view. I mention this because I have heard on several occasions that 'no-one has ever seen the Giant Squid' but I do not think this can be so.... Has anyone else seen these creatures? It was interesting also because it is an area where there are female sperm whales. (20)

Perhaps, instead of categorically clinging to the closed system I have worked so hard to establish, I ought to be more open-minded. Maybe there are bigger giant squids out there, and maybe people have actually seen them. That they haven't been measured may not be all that important anyway. Can we dismiss every account that doesn't fall within our established guidelines? Unfortunately, all these accounts of giants--like so many cryptozoological stories--are not accompanied by corroborating witnesses, photographs, or a measurable specimen. While I cannot prove (or disprove) these accounts of *giant* giant squid, I think it is better to acknowledge these stories than to ignore them.

Notes

(1) Wood, G.L. 1982. *The Guinness Book of Animal Facts and Feats.* (London: Guinness Superlatives Ltd.)

(2) Time-Life Books. 1988. *Dangerous Sea Creatures.* (New York: Time Inc.)

(3) Heuvelmans, B. 1958. *Dans le sillage des monstres marins: le kraken et le poulpe collosal.* (Paris: Librairie Plon.)

(4) Heuvelmans, B. 1958. *On the Track of Unknown Animals.* (1995 Repr. London: Kegan-Paul International.)

(5) Grønningsæter, A. 1946. "Sjørmen-blekksprutten." *Naturen* 70: 379-80.

(6) Heuvelmans, B. 1968. *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents.* (New York: Hill and Wang.)

(7) LeBlond, P.H., and J. Sibert. 1973. Observations of Large Unidentified Marine Animals in British Columbia and Adjacent Waters. Unpublished Manuscript. Institute of Oceanography, University of British Columbia.

(8) Bright, M. 1989. *There are Giants in the Sea.* (London: Robson.)

(9) *Ibid.*

(10) Starkey, J.D. 1963. "I Saw a Sea Monster." *Animals* 2(23): 629, 644.

(11) Steenstrup, J. 1849-1900. *The Cephalopod Papers of Japetus Steenstrup.* 1962 English translation by A. Volsoe, J. Knudsen, and W. Rees. (Copenhagen: Danish Science Press.)

(12) Voss, G.L.1956. "A Review of the Cephalopods of the Gulf of Mexico." *Bulletin of Marine Science of the Gulf and Caribbean* 6: 85-178.

(13) Hjort, J., in Murray, J., and J. Hjort. 1912. *The Depths of the Ocean.* (London: Macmillan & Co.)

(14) Time-Life Books, 1988. *op. cit.*

(15) Wood, G.L. 1982. *op. cit.*

(16) Ley, W. 1959. *Exotic Zoology.* (Repr. 1987, New York: Bonanza.)

(17) Clarke, M.R. 1980. "Cephalopods in the Diet of Sperm Whales of the Southern Hemisphere and Their Bearing on Sperm Whale Biology." *Discovery Reports* 37:1-324.

(18) Matthews, L.H. 1938. "The Sperm Whale, *Physeter catadon*." *Discovery Reports* 27: 93-168.

(19) Aldrich, F.A. 1967. "Newfoundland's Giant Squid." *Animals* 10 (1): 20-21.

(20) McDowall, C.A. 1998. "Giant Squid?" *Marine Observer* 68 (339): 39.

The "Piasa" as a Representation of the "Underwater Panther"

by John L. Moore

The story of two pictographs known as the "piasa," located on a bluff by the Mississippi River between the mouths of the Illinois and Missouri rivers (i.e., near present-day Alton, Illinois), has frequently been repeated in the cryptozoological literature (e.g., Coleman, 1985: 37-39; Hall, 1994: 24-28; Shuker, 1995: 57-58). First seen in 1673, it is usually stated that they were destroyed in the mid-nineteenth century. It has frequently been asserted by cryptozoologists that the "piasa" was an unknown flying animal (either a giant bird or a living pterodactyl), due to the assumption that the pictographs depicted a winged animal and that such an animal was described in local Native American traditions. It will be argued below, however, that these assumptions appear to be groundless.

The earliest references to the "piasa" are in the documents about the famous expedition to the Mississippi River conducted in 1673 by Louis Jolliet, a trader and explorer, Jacques Marquette, a Jesuit missionary, and several others. The best known of these is a detailed description of the pictographs included in the first chapter of the "Récit des Voyages et des Découvertes du Père Jacques Marquette," an account of the expedition and subsequent missionary work in the area: (1)

> While Skirting some rocks, which by Their height and Length inspired awe, We saw upon one of them two painted monsters which at first made Us afraid, and upon Which the boldest savages dare not Long rest their eyes. They are as large As a calf; they have Horns on their heads Like those of deer, a horrible look, red eyes, a beard Like a tiger's, a face somewhat like a man's, a body Covered with scales, and so Long A tail that it winds all around the Body, passing above the head and going back between the legs, ending in a Fish's tail. Green, red, and black are the three Colors composing the Picture. Moreover, these 2 monsters are so well painted that we cannot believe that any savage is their author; for good painters in france would find it difficult to paint so well,--and, besides, they are so high up on the rock that it is difficult to reach that place Conveniently to paint them. Here is approximately The shape of these monsters, As we have faithfully Copied It. [Thwaites, 1900: 139-141]

There is no sketch of the pictographs in any of the surviving manuscript copies of the Marquette "Récit" (Hamilton, 1970: 136). However, a map that was made in 1678 by Jean-Baptiste Louis Franquelin, based on a subsequently lost map of the area drawn from memory by Jolliet (see Delanglez, 1946a), does include a drawing of the "piasa" (reproduced in Sparks, 1990: 67) that closely matches the description in the Marquette "Récit" (Fig. 1).

(1) The authorship of the first chapter of the Marquette "Récit" is controversial. Delanglez (1946b) argued that it was written by Claude Dablon (who was in charge of Jesuit activities in New France at the time), using reports from the expedition. Hamilton (1970), however, argued that it was originally by Marquette, although edited by Dablon. Other hypotheses have been proposed as well.

Moore, John L. 1998. "The 'Piasa' as a Representation of the 'Underwater Panther.'" *The Cryptozoology Review* 3 (1): 20-26.

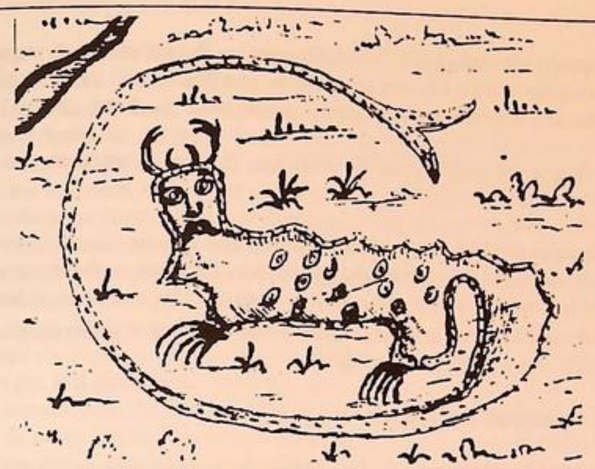


Fig. 1. The drawing of the "piasa" on the 1678 map by Franquelin. From Sparks (1990: 67).

The next known authentic record of the "piasa" is from 1687, when Henri Joutel, who was returning from a disastrous attempt to create a French colony on the Gulf of Mexico, wrote about the pictographs in his journal. (2) Unfortunately, the passage dealing with the "piasa" has been lost from the autograph copy, and is known only from two abridgements (Delanglez, 1938: 11-20), one of which (the De Michel version) reads as follows:

> The 2d [of September 1687], we arriv'd at the Place, where the Figure is of the pretended Monster spoken of by Father *Marquet* [sic]. That Monster consists of two scurvy Figures drawn in red, on the flat side of a Rock, about eight or ten Foot high, which wants very much of the extraordinary Height that Relation mentions. However our *Indians* paid Homage, by offering Sacrifice to that Stone, tho' we endeavour'd to give them to understand, that the said Rock had no Manner of Virtue, and that we worship'd something above it, pointing up to Heaven; but it was to no Purpose, and they made Signs to us, that they should die if they did not perform that Duty. [Stiles, 1906: 186-187]

The final report of the "piasa" from the seventeenth-century is by Jean François Buisson de St. Cosme, another missionary, who saw it in 1698 and reported in 1699 that:

> Three or four leagues lower down [3] we saw, on the left bank, a rock on which some figures are painted and for which the savages are said to have a certain veneration. They are now nearly effaced. [Kellogg, 1917: 355]

So far as the author is aware, there are no further references to the pictographs (apart from material based on known earlier writings) until 1812, when Amos Stoddard reported that:

(2) There are two other accounts of the "piasa" from the seventeenth century (one is attributed to Anastasius Douay, the other is by Louis Hennepin; see Delanglez, 1946a: 116-121; Temple, 1956: 309-312), but both of them were published in books that are completely untrustworthy (see Delanglez, 1939, 1948; Hamilton, 1976).

(3) Both the Marquette "Récit" and Joutel agree that the pictographs were above the mouth of the Missouri River; St. Cosme, however, seems to say that they were below it. While it is possible that he meant to say the pictographs were "[t]hree or four leagues lower" than the mouth of the Illinois (Voelker, 1914: 85-86) or that he had forgotten their exact location, the possibility that St. Cosme was referring to some other pictographs should not be excluded.

> What they [Jolliet and Marquette] call *Painted Monsters* on the side of a high perpendicular rock, apparently inaccessible to man, between the Missouri and Illinois, and known to the moderns by the name of *Piesa*, still remain in a good degree of preservation. [Stoddard, 1812: 17.]

It is important to note that, so far as is known, Stoddard was the first to associate the name "piasa" with the pictographs.

In 1836, *The Family Magazine* published an article about the "piasa" by John Russell, a schoolteacher, postmaster, Baptist minister, and writer. Russell's article has arguably had more influence on the interpretation of the "piasa" by cryptozoologists than any other source, as it gave the creature both its wings and the most frequently repeated legend about it. (4) As both of these are of central importance to the standard cryptozoological interpretation of the pictographs, Russell's article will be quoted here in full:

> The Piasâ: An Indian Tradition of Illinois
>
> No part of the United States, not even the highlands of the Hudson, can vie, in wild and romantick scenery, with the bluffs of Illinois. On one side of the river, often at the water's edge, a perpendicular wall of rock rises to the height of some hundred feet. Generally on the opposite shore is a level bottom or prairie, of several miles in width, extending to a similar bluff that runs parallel with the river.
>
> One of these ranges commences at Alton, and extends with few intervals for many miles along the left bank of the Illinois. In descending the river to Alton, the traveller will observe between that town and the mouth of the Illinois, a narrow ravine through which a small stream discharges its waters into the Mississippi. That stream is the Piasâ. Its name is Indian, and signifies in the language of the Illini [Illinois], "THE BIRD THAT DEVOURS MEN." Near the mouth of that stream, on the smooth and perpendicular face of the bluff, at an elevation which no human art can reach, is cut the figure of an enormous bird, with its wings extended. The bird which this figure represents was called by the Indians, the Piasâ, and from this is derived the name of the stream.
>
> The tradition of the Piasâ is still current among all the tribes of the Upper Mississippi, and those who have inhabited the valley of the Illinois, and is briefly thus: "Many thousand moons before the arrival of the pale faces, when the great magalonyx [sic] and mastodon, whose bones are now dug up, were still living in this land of the green prairies, there existed a bird of such dimensions that he could easily carry off, in his talons, a full grown deer. Having obtained a taste of human flesh, from that time he would prey upon nothing else. He was artful as he was powerful; would dart suddenly and unexpectedly upon an Indian, bear him off into one of the caves in the bluff, and devour him. Hundreds of warriours attempted for years to destroy him, but without success. Whole

(4) It is true that various reports of a wing-bearing "piasa" have been dated to before 1836, but all of them may be rejected. It was reported in 1896 that Gideon Spencer saw the pictographs in 1820 and that "the Indians . . . told him it was the Storm-bird or Thunderer" (Cunningham, 1975: 23); any account that says the "piasa" was a thunderbird may be rejected, as the "underwater panther" (which will be compared with the "piasa" below) and the Thunderbird were completely different beings (see Smith, 1995), and it seems unlikely that the two could have been confused. William Dennis' 1825 drawing of a "Flying Dragon" was identified as the "piasa" by William McAdams (1887: 8); this is certainly not the case, as it does not even vaguely resemble any descriptions of the pictographs and there is no evidence that it was associated with them until McAdams tried to make a connection between the two (Sparks, 1990: 50-51). Perry Armstrong's (1887) lurid tale of the "piasa," supposedly collected from the Miami tribe in approximately 1827, is highly sensationalized and is not genuine (Hallwas, 1982: 19; Sparks, 1990: 113). Heinrich Gerke's 1832 account of the "piasa" is suspect and his description of it as a "large goose" and "four dragon heads" (Sparks, 1990: 61) hardly matches other sources.

> villages were nearly depopulated, and consternation spread through all the tribes of the Illini. At length, Ouatogá, a chief, whose fame as a warriour extended even beyond the great lakes, separating himself from the rest of his tribe, fasted in solitude for the space of a whole moon, and prayed to the Great Spirit, the Master of life, that he would protect his children from the Piasâ. On the last night of the fast, the Great Spirit appeared to Ouatogá in a dream, and directed him to select twenty of his warriours, each armed with a bow and a poisoned arrow, and conceal them in a designated spot. Near the place of their concealment, another warriour was to stand in open view, as a victim for the Piasâ, which they must shoot the instant that he pounced upon his prey. When the chief awoke in the morning, he thanked the Great Spirit, and returning to his tribe, told them his dream. The warriours were quickly selected and placed in ambush as directed. Ouatogá offered himself as the victim. He was willing to die for his tribe. Placing himself in open view of the bluff, he soon saw the Piasâ perched on the cliff eying his prey. Ouatogá drew up his manly form to its utmost height, and planting his feet firmly upon the earth, began to chant the death-song of a warriour. A moment after, the Piasâ rose into the air and, swift as the thunderbolt, darted down upon the chief. Scarcely had he reached his victim, when every bow was sprung, and every arrow sent, to the feather, into his body. The Piasâ uttered a wild, fearful scream, that resounded far over the opposite side of the river, and expired. Ouatogá was safe. Not an arrow, nor even the talons of the bird, had touched him. The Master of life in admiration of the generous deed of Ouatogá had held over him an invisible shield. In memory of this event, the image of the Piasâ was engraved on the face of the bluff. Such is the Indian tradition. Of course I do not vouch for its truth. This much, however, is certain; the figure of a large bird cut into the solid rock, is still there, and at a height that is perfectly inaccessible. How and for what purpose it was made, I leave for others to determine; even at this day, an Indian never passes that spot in his canoe without firing his gun at the figure of the bird. The marks of balls on the rock are almost innumerable.
>
> Near the close of March of the present year, I was induced to visit the bluffs below the mouth of the Illinois and above that of the Piasâ. My curiosity was principally directed to the examination of a cave connected with the above traditions, as one of those to which the bird had carried its human victims. Preceded by an intelligent guide who carried a spade, I set out on my excursion. The cave was extremely difficult of access, and at one point of our progress I stood at an elevation of more than one hundred and fifty feet on the face of the bluff, with barely room to sustain one foot. The unbroken wall towered above me, while below was the river. After a long and perilous clambering we reached the cave which was about fifty feet above the surface of the river. By the aid of a long pole, placed on the projecting rock and the upper end touching the mouth of the cave, we succeeded in entering it. Nothing could be more impressive than the view from the entrance of this cavern. The Mississippi was rolling in silent grandeur beneath us: high over our heads a single cedar hung its branches over the cliff, on the blasted top of which was seated a bald eagle. No other sound or sign of life was near us. A sabbath stillness rested upon the scene. Not a cloud was in the heavens; not a breath of air was stirring. The broad Mississippi lay before us, calm and smooth, as a lake. The landscape presented the same wild aspect as it did before it had yet met the eye of the white man.
>
> The roof of the cavern was vaulted, the top of which was hardly less than twenty-five feet in height. The shape of the cave was irregular, but so far as I could judge, the bottom would average twenty by thirty feet. The floor of this cave throughout its whole extent was a mass of human bones. Sculls [sic] and other bones were mingled together in the utmost confusion. To what depth they extended I am unable to decide, but we dug to the depth of three or four feet in every quarter of the cavern and still we found only bones. The remains of thousands must have been deposited here: How, and by whom, and for what purpose, it is impossible even to conjecture. J.R. [Quoted in

Temple, 1956: 313-316.]

Despite the influence that this account had on subsequent interpretations of the pictographs, there are many reasons to doubt the reliability of Russell's article. The style in which Russell recounts the legend of the "piasa" is very dramatic; clearly, if it is an authentic Native American legend it has been altered and embellished by Russell, who did indeed write much fiction (see Flanagan, 1949). Despite what he said about how widespread the "legend" was, it has never been recorded in a form that is not obviously descended from his article. Ouatogá, "whose fame as a warriour extended even beyond the great lakes," is not known from any legitimate sources (Dunn, 1923: 105; Sparks, 1990: 37). Nor are there any records that support Russell's description of the cave of the "piasa." (There was, however, a cave near Grafton, Illinois, locally known as "Bone Cave," that contained many bones (although most were not human), as well as artifacts such as pottery sherds and stone implements (see McAdams, 1887: 34-40), and probably gave Russell the idea for his cave (cf. Sparks, 1990: 36).)

Although many portions of Russell's article are highly detailed, he never describes the pictograph (in his story, there is only one pictograph), apart from stating that it had wings and was "at an elevation which no human art can reach." Neither of these features are present in earlier descriptions. (5) (Indeed, Hallwas (1982: 20) praised this lack of description for providing a "sense of mystery about the Piasa bird.") It has frequently been argued that Russell never intended his story to be interpreted as anything but the fiction that it was (e.g., Sparks, 1990: 29; Temple, 1956: 316; but see Hallwas, 1982). Indeed, he seems to have confessed that it was not authentic; when William McAdams wrote to Russell on the matter,

> He answered that there was a somewhat similar tradition among the Indians, but he admitted, to use his own words, that the story was "*somewhat illustrated.*" [McAdams, 1887: 5]

Furthermore, John Snyder reported that Russell's son, Spencer G. Russell, once told him that "his father at one time confessed to him that the legend of the Piasa Bird was the product of imagination coupled with Marquette's account" (Temple, 1956: 316).

Russell's account of the meaning of the word "piasa" is not supported by any trustworthy sources (Belting, 1973: 305; Dunn, 1923: 105). Although several alternative etymologies have been proposed (Sparks, 1990: 23-27), it seems most likely to have originated from the archaic French word "Paillissa," which means "palisade," as some bluffs along the Mississippi near where the "piasa" was located were referred to as the "Paillissa rocks" in 1797, according to Nicolas de Finiels (Ekberg and Foley, 1989: 76, 83). Furthermore, there are several occurrences of the word "piasa" that predate Stoddard's 1812 book, all of which seem to refer to geographical features; (6) indeed, Russell first introduces it in his story as the name of a stream.

While there are numerous subsequent reports of the "piasa" from the nineteenth century, the vast majority of them are either derived from Russell's article or some other earlier source, are equally spurious, or are too vague to be of any value. Apart from Stoddard's brief mention of the pictographs, there is no reason to think that they did not disappear (probably due to weathering) shortly after St. Cosme's report of them at the end of the seventeenth century. Indeed, a large number of travellers to the area during this time period either explicitly noted the absence of the

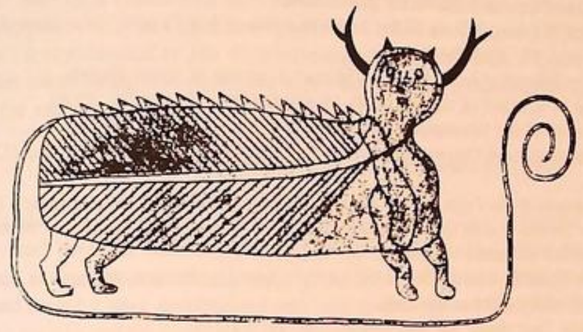
(5) There has been a long tradition of misreading the Marquette "Récit" to indicate that the pictographs were located at a great height on the bluff. Joutel stated that they were at a height of only eight or ten feet, and, as Delanglez (1946a: 118) noted, "it would still be difficult to paint them 'conveniently'" at that elevation.

(6) They are as follows: 1773, Patrick Kennedy refers to "Piasas" and "Piasa" in his journal (Hutchins, 1778: 51, 58); 1778, Thomas Hutchins prints Kennedy's journal and includes "Piasas" on his map of the area (reproduced in Tucker, 1942: pl. 29); 1804, William Clark calls a stream "Piasaw C" on his map of the area (Osgood, 1964: 198); 1807, a "Pyesaw Rock" is referred to in the records of Indiana Territory (Dunn, 1923: 105-106).

pictographs or else failed to mention them in otherwise detailed accounts of the area (see Sparks, 1990: 55-66, passim), which seems unusual as the pictographs are usually treated as being very remarkable in those writings that do mention them.

There are no credible references to a winged "piasa," and it seems highly unlikely that Marquette and Jolliet could fail to mention such an obvious and interesting feature, or that it was not visible for some reason (as was argued by, e.g., S. Russell in English, 1922: 153; McAdams, 1887: 39-40). There does not seem to be any good reason to suppose that the pictographs ever had wings or were intended to represent flying animals. This conclusion would seem to invalidate the interpretation of the pictographs that has frequently been advanced by certain cryptozoologists.

A.



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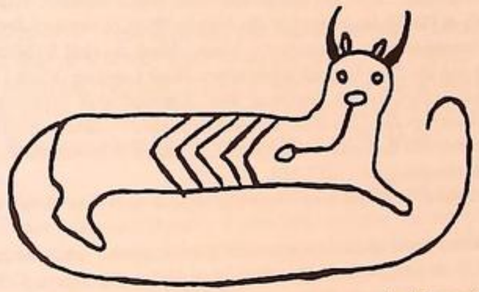

Fig. 2. Two drawings of the "underwater panther" which are particularly reminiscent of the "piasa." A. From Schoolcraft (1852: pl. 55, fig. 7). B. From Howard (1960: p. 221, fig. 2).

There is, however, a remarkable resemblance between the description in the Marquette "Récit" and Franquelin's drawing and some drawings of the water monster generally referred to as the "underwater panther" (Fig. 2), belief in which is widespread in Native American tribes in Illinois and other parts of the continent (see Dewdney, 1975: 122-130; Eyman, 1963; Smith, 1995). Almost every feature in the description in the Marquette "Récit" can be found in representations of the "underwater panther." This resemblance has already been noted several times (e.g., Belting, 1973; Dunn, 1923; Sparks, 1990: 21-27), and it does not seem to be coincidental. Indeed, this similarity is so remarkable that even if the pictograph did have wings (there are, in fact, some representations of winged animals that have been compared to the "underwater panther" (Phillips and Brown, 1975: 140-143, 1980: passim, esp. p. xi), there would be no reason to think that it represented anything other than a composite animal.

Clearly all claims of links between the "piasa" and contemporary reports of unknown flying animals appear to be utterly groundless.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to sincerely thank Andrew Gable, Gerald Musinsky, and Ben Roesch for offering advice, encouragement, and copies of references that he could not get.

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A Review of Alleged Sea Serpent Carcasses Worldwide (Part Three -- 1897-1906)

by Ben S. Roesch

This article is the third part of a continuing series examining all alleged sea serpent carcasses reported in the literature. The first part appeared in *The Cryptozoology Review* vol. 2 no. 2 (pp. 6-27), covering reports from 1648 to 1880. The second part was published in *The Cryptozoology Review* vol. 2 no. 3 (pp. 25-35), and covered reports from 1881 to 1896. This third instalment continues where the second part ended, covering reports from 1897 to 1906, and is written in the same format.

The Suwarrow Island Carcass (February, 1899)

In 1899, the English trading steamer *Emu* was making its way to Sydney, Australia, when it made a stop at Suwarrow Island, an island between Samoa and Tahiti, in the south Pacific. While there, they were told by the natives that an enormous serpentine animal referred to as a "devil-fish" had washed up nearby. The crew went to secure the specimen, and found a very decomposed and very malodorous carcass, which the ship's Captain Oliver estimated was 60 tons in weight and 60 ft (18 m) long.

The massive carcass was said to be covered with hair and was of a brownish colour. It had a 3 ft (90 cm) long skull and its head was shaped like that of a horse; some of its ribs were 2.5 ft (75 cm) long; its spine was 4 inches (10 cm) in diameter; the natives said it had pectoral "flappers" when it first washed ashore; and two "tusks" were noted at the distal (farthest) end of the lower jaw. One article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* stated that it had two heads, but this is probably the result of misinformation or misinterpretation of the carcass.

The description given by the *Emu*'s crew is a fairly good one, but it does not describe an unknown sea creature, but rather a very rotten beaked whale. Ziphiids (family Ziphiidae), as these odontocetes are known scientifically, are a very elusive group which inhabit deep pelagic waters and are rarely seen alive, or dead for that matter. The particular trait of the Suwarrow carcass that gives away a ziphiid identity is the mention of the two "tusks" at the end of the creature's lower jaw. All ziphiids (except the Tasman beaked whale [*Tasmacetus shepherdi*] [Fig. 1]) have very small,

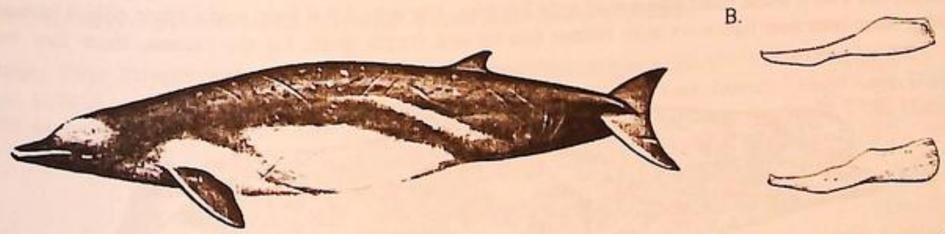

Fig. 1. A. Tasman beaked whale (*Tasmacetus shepherdi*). B. Lower jaw of Tasman beaked whale (*Tasmacetus shepherdi*) (top) compared to lower jaw of another beaked whale, the southern bottlenose whale (*Hyperoodon planifrons*) (bottom). Note presence of a full set of teeth on the former, and lack of a full set of teeth on the latter. All from Ellis (1980)

Roesch, Ben S. 1998. "A Review of Alleged Sea Serpent Carcasses Worldwide (Part Three--1897-1906)." *The Cryptozoology Review* 3 (1): 27-31.

almost vestigial, teeth, but in males there are two enlarged teeth found opposite each other about half-way down or at the front of the lower jaws (females of the genus *Berardius* also have these enlarged teeth). These two teeth, which vary in size depending on the species, are reminiscent of small tusks. They are especially large in the genus *Mesoplodon* and may be used in intraspecific mating battles (males often bear the scars of competing males on their flanks). Besides the mention of "tusks", the presence of flappers and hairy skin are also strong indications of a whale identity. The hairy skin is probably a result of decomposing blubber, which breaks down into string-like masses of collagen fibres that resemble hair, fur or even feathers. Even the carcasses' horse-like head can be explained by a beaked whale, as all cetaceans have somewhat horse-like skulls (this is not unusual considering the group descended from ancient horse-like ungulates). Indeed, one Dr. Waite, of the Australian Museum, declared that the Suwarrow carcass was a beaked whale upon studying some remains taken to Sydney by the ship's crew.

Fig. 2. Baird's beaked whale (*Berardius bairdii*). From Ellis (1980).

It seems the mystery is over, but there is one problem with the beaked whale identity, and that is the length given for the Suwarrow carcass. The largest ziphiid is Baird's beaked whale (*Berardius bairdii*) (Fig. 2), males of which may grow to a maximum of about 12 m (40 ft)--a far cry from the 18 m (60 ft) given for the Suwarrow carcass. Regardless, Baird's beaked whale inhabits the northernmost reaches of the Pacific, so it is unlikely this species is responsible. Of the 10 ziphiids that inhabit temperate or tropical waters in the south Pacific, the largest is the southern bottlenose whale (*Hyperoodon planifrons*) (Fig. 3), at a maximum of 9 m [30 ft] for males. It, however, has such small teeth at the apex of its jaws that I do not believe it could be responsible for the Suwarrow carcass, which had more prominent "tusks". After the southern bottlenose whale, Cuvier's beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*) (Fig. 4) is the largest in south Pacific waters. Females of this species may reach maximum lengths of 7 m (23 ft) (no data is available on males). Again, this is much smaller than the dimensions given for the Suwarrow carcass. However, there is good reason to believe that the *Emu*'s Captain was mistaken in his estimates of the size of the carcass, or, more likely, there was a miscommunication of the real size of the carcass to the newspapers. It is simply impossible that a 60 ft whale could have a skull only 3 ft long, ribs only 2.5 ft long, and a spine only 4 inches in diameter (these latter three figures are more reliable than the total length given for the carcass, since they were

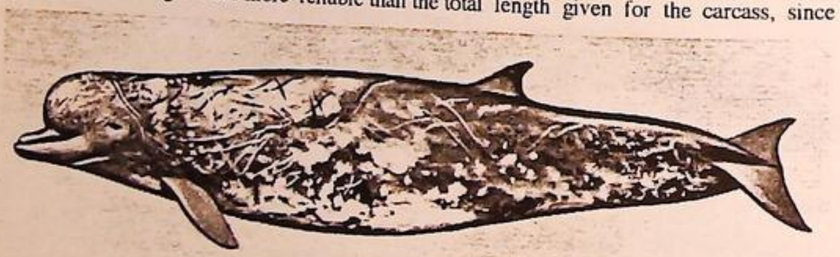

Fig. 3. Southern bottlenose whale (*Hyperoodon planifrons*). From Ellis (1980).

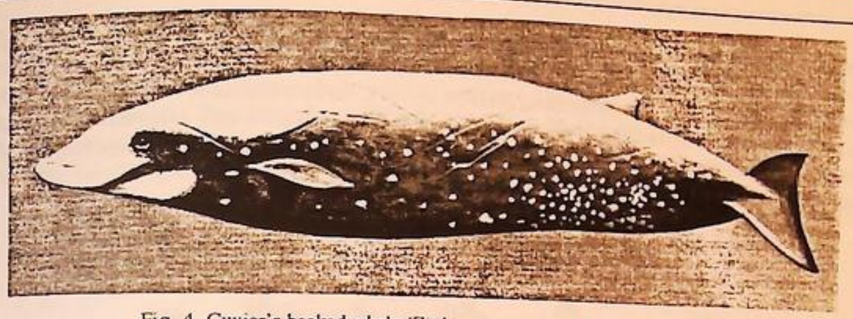

Fig. 4. Cuvier's beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*). From Ellis (1980).

probably measured directly, while the total length was estimated). For comparison, one specimen of southern bottlenose whale that measured 7 m (23 ft) in length had a skull that was 1.4 m (4.6 ft) long (Tinker, 1988). Using these morphometrics, a beaked whale with a head about 3 ft long would be about 15± ft total length. (This length would also correspond well with the 2.5 ft long ribs and 4 inch diameter spine of the Suwarrow carcass.) With this new figure, we can easily fit many beaked whale species into the proverbial shoes of the Suwarrow carcass. While it is impossible to nail down the species responsible for the carcass, a member of the genus *Mesoplodon*, such as the strap-toothed whale (*M. layardii*) (Fig. 5), is probably most likely.

Fig. 5. Strap-toothed whale (*Mesoplodon layardii*). From Ellis (1980).

In conclusion, it is most likely that the Suwarrow carcass was in fact a species of beaked whale, but the length of the carcass was greatly exagerrated or mistaken.

1899 (February) - Suwarrow Island, Polynesia - *Emu* = Beaked whale (Ziphiidae)

Sources: Ellis, Richard. 1980. *The Book of Whales*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf). // Fort, Charles. 1931. *Lo!* Repr. 1974 as pp. 539-839 of *The Complete Books of Charles Fort*. (New York: Dover). // Heuvelmans, Bernard. 1968. *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*. (New York: Hill and Wang), p. 85. // Tinker, Spencer W. 1988. *Whales of the World*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill). // Watson, Lyall. 1985. *Whales of the World*. (London: Hutchinson).

Two More Oarfish (February 22, 1901 and 1903)

On February 22, 1901, a large oarfish (*Regalecus glesne*) washed ashore at Newport Beach, California. It was examined by Horatio J. Forgy, who found that it weighed approximately 500 or 600 pounds (227 or 272 kg) and was just over 21 ft (6.4 m) long. Heuvelmans (1968) reports that no other measurements were taken, but guessed that the creature's "depth must have been about 18 inches [46 cm] and its thickness 9 to 12 inches [23 to 30 cm]", based on a photograph that is probably of the same animal, published in an article in *Animal Life* in 1954 (Fig. 6). The author

of the article, J. Charles Davis II, stated that the oarfish in the photo (which he actually thought was a veritable sea serpent) washed ashore at Newport Beach in 1903, but was unsure of the exact date. Using the people in the photo for scale, the oarfish pictured was probably about 20 ft (6 m) long. As Heuvelmans (1968) concluded, it would be quite remarkable if two similarly-sized oarfish washed ashore at the same spot within two years of eachother. Thus, the *Animal Life* photo probably depicts the oarfish that washed ashore in 1901 at Newport Beach and was examined by Horatio Forgy.

Fig. 6. Oarfish (*Regalecus glesne*) that washed ashore at Newport Beach, California in 1901. From Heuvelmans (1968).

Another oarfish appeared in 1903 (possibly in August) off Iceland, and was reported by the crew of the *Indian*. Heuvelmans (1968) includes a listing of this account, but gives no details in the text or a citation. This is, however, relatively unimportant for this discussion, as the creature was undoubtedly an oarfish.

1901 (22 Feb) - Newport Beach, California, USA - Horatio Forgy = Oarfish (*Regalecus glesne*)

1903 (?Aug) - Iceland - *Indian* = Oarfish

Source: Heuvelmans, Bernard. 1968. *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*. (New York: Hill and Wang), pp. 85-86, 588.

The *Tropper*'s Sea Serpent (March 20, 1906)

The only source I have for this alleged sea serpent carcass is Heuvelmans (1968) (who listed its identity as unkown):

> On 20 March 1906 Captain Rathbone of the *Tropper* saw near Dungeness, Kent [England], a carcase 50 feet [15 m] long with small ears and white stripes which he took to be a sea-serpent.

This description does not give us much to work with, and it is hard to say what the carcass might have been. One thing that can be said is that the carcass might not have necessarily had "small ears". As we have seen in previous cases, decomposing whale and shark carcasses can attain strange shapes, often leading viewers to see rotted fins or flesh as body parts such as legs, or possibly in this case, ears. Perhaps then, the *Tropper*'s carcass is simply another rotted whale. Besides, if the length given for the carcass is reliable, then a whale is really the only known marine animal that it could be. Also, the "white stripes" of the *Tropper*'s carcass could be the ventral grooves or pleats found on the underside of the mouth and anterior half of the body of all balaenopterid (rorqual) whales (Fig. 7). These

ventral grooves are dark in colour, but could result in white stripes as they are superimposed on the white underside of the whale. A rotting balaenopterid floating upside down in the water could present the above description (such an occurence tricked Capt. Slocum of the *Saladin* in 1870 and Capt. Ingalls of the *Chalcedony* in 1880 into thinking that they saw a sea serpent [see Heuvelmans, 1968: 222-223]). The "ears" of the *Tropper*'s carcass might be explained if the pectoral fins of the whale had rotted away and been torn apart by scavengers, leaving small stumps in their place. The "ears" might also be explained by the sloughing off of blubber and skin in decomposition.

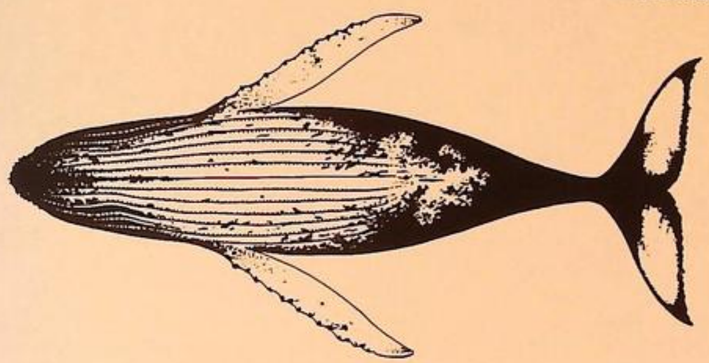

Fig. 7. Ventral view of the humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), showing its ventral grooves. From Ellis (1980).

Then again, maybe the *Tropper*'s carcass represents a bona fide sea serpent. In the end, though, the details are simply too scarce to make any solid conclusions.

1906 (20 Mar) - Dungeness, Kent, England - *Tropper* = ?Balaenopterid whale

Sources: Ellis, Richard. 1980. *The Book of Whales*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf). // Heuvelmans, Bernard. 1968. *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*. (New York: Hill and Wang), p. 569.

An Oarfish off Sumbawa, Indonesia (1906)

Heuvelmans (1968) does not discuss this case in text, but there is no reason to doubt his identifying it as an oarfish.

1906 - Sumbawa, Indonesia - ? = Oarfish

Source: Heuvelmans, Bernard. 1968. *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*. (New York: Hill and Wang).

Summary Listing

Legend: Date - Location - Witness(es) - Length (meters, rounded off) = Probable Identity

1899 (February) - Suwarrow Island, Polynesia - *Enui* - ?18 m = Beaked whale (Ziphiidae)
1901 (22 Feb) - Newport Beach, California, USA - Horatio Forgy - 6 m = Oarfish (*Regalecus glesne*)
1903 (?Aug) - Iceland - *Indian* - ? = Oarfish
1906 (20 Mar) - Dungeness, Kent, England - *Tropper* - 15 m = ?Balaenopterid whale
1906 - Sumbawa, Indonesia - ? - ? = Oarfish

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End Page

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Coming Soon in *TCR*: Further installments of a review of alleged sea serpent carcasses (by Ben S. Roesch); the case against the survival of *Carcharodon megalodon* (by Ben S. Roesch); further installments of a series on the cryptozoology of the moa (by Darren Naish); great news coverage and much more! The next issue will be out in October.